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ABSTRACT

A general review is presented of community services in the small/rural community college. Community services are defined as those action programs of the college undertaken independently or in cooperation with other community groups and agencies which direct the educational resources of the college toward serving the individual, the group, and community needs. Results of a review of the literature are cited with regard to the special characteristics and problems of the small/rural college, community organizing, developing objectives for comprehensive community service programs, and accountability. Exemplary programs are highlighted for the following areas: (1) college involvement in local decision-making; (2) inter-agency cooperation; (3) school industry cooperation; (4) alternative delivery systems; (5) senior citizen programs; (6) programs for children; (7) programs for prisoners; and (8) programs in the cultural services such as museums, planetariums, and nature trails. The advantages and disadvantages of providing community services in small/rural community colleges are also delineated. It is concluded that community colleges must interrupt the traditional credit hour fixation, influence funding patterns, and design new means for measuring community college productivity in order to fulfill the colleges' one truly unique mission--community services. (MB)

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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES

ISLANDS OF INNOVATION: NEW AND SMALL

COMMUNITY SERVICES IN THE SMALL/RURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

by

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When I volunteered to make this presentation on community services there were two things that I didn't know about and if I had, I might not be standing here today. The first was the on-going battle of exactly what is meant by community services and, second, the sparsity of material on the small/rural community college. One of my early impressions after becoming President of a small/rural community college was that the group of presidents leading this type of institution might be suffering from the analogy that Art Cohen presented as symptomatic of small institutions. He noted the man was 5 feet 8 inches tall, weighed 160 pounds and he looked at a man who was 6 feet 2 inches tall and weighed 190 pounds. The 6 feet 2 inch man was his neighbor and he says to himself, "I am obviously different, therefore, I must have different problems, but I'm not sure what they are." Ladies and gentlemen, after having experienced two years of "smallness" and several years of "bigness", I think Cohen was right; the problems in a small/rural community college are not different from those faced in larger institutions, there is merely a difference in degree.

For the purpose of this paper, we shall simplistically define community service as those action programs of the community college undertaken independently or in cooperation with other community groups and agencies which direct the educational resources of the college toward serving the individual, the group and community needs. Unfortunately, this is easier said than done in rural areas. We know that there has been little success with federal and state programs which are designed for unban areas and then handed down to rural areas where little success was achieved.

What no one seems to realize is the fact that as far as an area's development is concerned, the small/rural college will play a proportionately larger role than the urban institution would in its community. Those of us who constantly beat the bushes in trying to hire qualified part-time faculty know that in many instances there is a shortage of leadership in rural areas and it is the college that acts as the facilitating agent to bring about progressive change.

A review of the literature indicates that in rural areas, community services administrators must be especially creative, innovative, receptive, responsive and have a pioneering attitude in searching for and serving linkages. Unlike their urban and suburban counterparts, these communities have

special characteristics: financial, socio-economic, geographic, and otherwise which set them apart. Certainly, they are entirely capable of such activities as short courses, workshops, seminars, conferences, civic action programs, para-professional training counselor, career retraining and other community oriented programs. But the cost effectiveness of these programs is questionable when one looks at the amount of staff work needed to offer such an endeavor. In addition to the normal barriers, small/rural colleges need more effective faculty and student involvement, better coordination and cooperation in planning, greater attention to the needs among rural poor, wider outreach through extension and other means, new course sequences and sharing of facilities.

In a study done at West Shore Community College in Michigan, two approaches were used in community organizing: (1) information-rural development and, (2) problem solving. The informational approach established a number of community groups which serve as sources of information for the purpose of establishing a data bank at the community college. Data was collected and a means sought for a full-time economic specialist for rural development who would assist in utilizing the collected information. The problem solving approach centered on organizing a study group on the health needs of senior citizens. Some restructuring of local services took place along with plans to conduct a county-wide survey.

According to a paper by Fightmaster, presented at an Annual Convention of the Association of Community Colleges, there are five major objectives of any comprehensive community services program:

1. Provide educational services for all age and occupational groups utilizing the skills and knowledge of the college staff and outside experts;
2. Take educational, cultural and recreational activities to the total community;
3. become a center of community life;
4. provide the community with leadership in solving educational, social, and economic problems;
5. promote intellectual, cultural and recreational life in the college district.

Unfortunately, however, there are those who question the accountability of community services. In a paper presented to this very convention in 1976, a speaker stated that exemplary community service programs are isolated and relatively few in number and that the motivating stimulus has not been the concern of the college, but the availability of federal or foundation funding sources. He stated that community colleges have not generally been accountable to the broad heterogeneous community that they are designed to serve. While that author is free to express his opinion, the facts do not support him.

SHOW AND TELL IN COMMUNITY SERVICES

In response to a request to submit examples of innovative practices being offered at small/rural community colleges, Swede Phillips received hundreds of responses of which I would like to cite just a few of which I consider unique approaches. In trying to categorize many different facets of community services I have chosen to highlight approximately one-half dozen areas and to cite exemplary practices.

The first area is the college's involvement in local decision making. Six colleges have recently been chosen by the National Self-Help Resource Center and AACJC in a project supported by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. Three of the six are small and/or rural; they are: Wenatchee Valley Community College, Colorado Mountain College and Kentucky Southeast Community College. The purpose of this project is to attempt in the next three years to prove that the colleges can help citizens help themselves by becoming actively involved in local decision making processes. They will provide mechanisms to assist students in improving their lives and will focus on district and regional issues including a controversial river-front development, a new form of city government and a community convention center. Colorado Mountain College will work to bring community forces together to resolve conflicts and improve relations. The college serves the resort areas of Vale and Aspen as well as traditional mining and ranching areas. Kentucky Southeast Community College which serves the rural Appalachian community, will work in the area of filling in communication gaps

that exist because of geographical as well as cultural gaps. A fourth college, San Juan College, will develop a full-fledged center to deal with problems of high unemployment, heavy population growth, low education, poor communications and the lack of a centralized information base. This is most interesting since San Juan operates in a county that has over 5,000 sq. miles.

A second major area is community service programs in cooperation with other agencies. A prime example is Three Rivers Community College in Missouri. The campus is not being constructed through the normal bond issue of allocation of state funds; rather, it is being constructed from two separate EDA grants -- one from Washington and the other from the Governor's Discretionary Fund. A library building is also being planned which will be constructed through private donations and another building will be constructed by Poplar Bluffs Industries, Incorporated, a subsidiary of the are Chamber of Commerce.

Roane State Community College in Tennessee is involved in a pilot program for the training of operating technicians at a nuclear power plant site. This project is supposedly the first in the nation to involve cooperation of a federal agency, labor union and a community college. The College will also become the center for coal mining training programs in Tennessee. This effort will involve cooperative agreements with the TVA, U.S. Soil Conservation Agency, Department of the Interior, Tennessee Department of Labor and Tennessee Conservation Department.

At Mountain Empire Community College in Virginia, a project between the college and the Virginia Employment Commission is conducting a series of career exploration days for high school seniors.

Highland Community College in Illinois is helping to build a Y.M.C.A. on its campus and is contributing 1.7 of the 3.2 million dollar building fee. Highland will own the structure and the Y will have a fifty year lease to operate its program and provide instruction under contract for the college's physical education program.

Mississippi County College in Arkansas is a college without a library. The college has merged with the County Library system making Mississippi County Community College one of the few colleges in the nation to be served by such a multi-type, multi-purpose library.

Denmark Technical Education Center in South Carolina currently enrolls 30 mentally handicapped students who are housed on the campus where they receive instruction from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon.

The third area is programs with industry. Lincoln Trail College in Illinois sponsors two training programs for new personnel at area industries. These programs take place on location and are funded as a pilot program under DAVTE. This institution also brings in nationally recognized consultants to assist industries in the area.

Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College in South Carolina is working with the State to attract new industry.

Gulf Coast Junior College in Mississippi also has an exciting program for start-up training for new or expanding industry. The college identifies jobs, lists the tasks, analyzes each task, writes performance objectives, prepares the instructional materials and measures the trainees' performance.

John C. Caljoun State Community College in Alabama has developed apprenticeship programs with the areas' industries.

Guayama Center in Puerto Rico furnishes consultants to the business and industry of the area from the college from outside the campus.

Bay De Noc Community College in Michigan is in the manufacturing business and has machined parts for several companies as a way to involve students who are studying to work in an industry in some actual experience. In addition, Bay De Noc has a lumber jack college which provides workshops and seminars to people currently involved in the wood harvest industry and involves training people for initial entry into wood harvest activities.

Edison State Community College in Ohio televises and video tapes instructions for using manufacturing lab equipment.

Obviously, one of the major areas of concern to small/rural colleges is that of alternate delivery systems. When B. Lamar Johnson wrote his

original, "Islands of Innovation", the main alternative method of presentation was large group instruction or team teaching. Unfortunately, this approach is especially difficult in the small/rural college because they do not have either large numbers of students or regular television channels that are available to them. However, several small/rural institutions have indicated that they use cable TV and these include: Hibbing Community College in Minnesota; Pratt Community College in Kansas; Vermilion College in Minnesota; Colorado Mountain College; Northern Oklahoma Community College; New Mexico State University, San Juan Campus; Lehigh County Community College in Pennsylvania. Radio has also been used as a viable alternative method of instruction. This is shown by the work of Lake City Community College in Florida and by other colleges who have their own radio stations either a.m. or f.m. These include: Arizona Western College which specializes in bi-lingual programs; Dodge City Community College in Kansas which provides an outlet for public service and community interests by producing and airing PSAE's from non-profit, governmental and educational organizations as well as providing air-time for informational programming; Wabash Valley College in Illinois which has as one of its products assisting the blind, handicapped or shut-in who has difficulty reading printed material.

Programs for senior citizens seem to be available at most if not all community colleges. Some, however, are noteworthy. The Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), at Highland Community College in Illinois, serves as a clearinghouse, matching the abilities and interests of older persons with community needs. Colorado Mountain College sponsors a senior hostel which provides for senior citizens to have an interesting social experience and opportunity to meet other people and to stay in housing on campus. Senior Citizens, Incorporated of Wabash Valley provides employment to over 70 senior aides through a grant. Mid-Michigan Community College sponsors a Senior Citizen Travel Club and has an excess of 2,000 members. The Club presently offers more than 75 trips a year. At Pratt Community College in Kansas, the College provides handyman services for the elderly through the Building Trades Vocational Programs. At the Talent

Bank, sponsored by Edison Community College in Florida, the program is designed to recruit, screen and utilize the highly skilled professionals who retire in the Fort Meyers area.

Programs for children seem to be growing. Three colleges in Minnesota have structured such programs. Hibbing Community College sponsors Kids Campus, a program which enables children of all ages to attend courses on the college campus. Last year, 300 participated in such courses as: typing, earth science, tumbling, television production, photography, computer science, music, tennis, poetry, and guitar. During the past academic year this institution offered family oriented courses on Saturdays during the regular school year. Vermilion Community College offers college for kids on Saturdays during the months of November and April. They have many of the same experiences as does Hibbing plus using calculators, computing, and learning sign languages. All students are in grades kindergarten to sixth. Itasca Community College serves up to 600 students in 51 courses in this type of endeavor.

Many community colleges also place programs for prisoners under the aegis of community service. Cooke County College in Texas, through the cooperation and funding of the Texas Youth Council and Texas Vocational Rehabilitation Commission, offers courses in welding, auto body repair, mechanics, and horticulture to youthful offenders sentenced in the Gainesville State School. Both male and female students are bused to the campus for these classes. Privilege of enrollment is based on a merit point system. Patrick Henry Community College in Virginia has a carpentry training program taken through the college which enables the incarcerated individuals to participate in the work release program with local construction firms.

Many institutions are getting into the areas of museums, planetariums, arboretums, nature trails and other types of cultural services. Crowder College in Missouri founded a museum in 1970 and provides the college and the community with changing exhibits throughout the year. Alice Lloyd College in Kentucky has five on-going programs and has as their goal to

encourage students to be both learners and contributors, to preserve a heritage, to understand the past as a guide to planning the future and to use the community as a resource. Lord Fairfax Community College in Virginia established an Institute in 1975 which was designed to be a co-curricular educational community service and includes the college working with the Valley of Virginia Historical and Folklife Institute to serve as an archive for print and non-print media holdings, cooperative service with other non-profit organizations or research individuals, organizational credit and/or non-credit courses offerings, seminars, workshops, and media presentations of an educational nature.

Ferrum College in Virginia received the First Place National Award for Best Community Service Program of any college in the country by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.

Bainbridge Junior College in Georgia maintains an archive section devoted to the presentation and preservation of historical manuscripts and rare books.

Bay De Noc Community College in Michigan has an entity entitled, "Project Pioneer" where future generations of that district will be able to listen to the lives of their forefathers as they listen to tapes or read transcripts derived from oral recitals of early residents.

Highland Community College Received total support from its Foundation for $100,000 landscaping program which will create an area arboretum for the campus.

Kenai Peninsula Community College holds its resource management courses outdoors as much as possible on its 340 acres. An outdoor classroom and 10 miles of nature trails are under construction although moose, bear and wolves are often found right on campus.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF COMMUNITY SERVICES IN A SMALL/RURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

There are both advantages and disadvantages in the offering of community services in a small/rural community college. The disadvantages are as follows:

1. difficulty in getting enough interested people for a course;
2. the need to offer a course several times to build up interest;
3. having an institutional goal of quality instruction, but having less expertise available to teach the course--a take what you can get attitude;
4. limited evaluation procedures;
6. large geographic boundaries, that is, there are enough people for a course but they live too far from each other;
7. a continuing question of whether career planning should be for employment in the immediate area of the college district or in the entire state/United States;
8. a disproportionate amount of work that must go into the development of workshops and seminars;
9. a disproportionate amount of planning for the number of people served;
10. lack of facilities;
11. The divergent needs i.e., town vs farm population, middle-class vs poverty value systems;
12. administratively there is a small support staff but all functions have to be carried out as found in larger institutions;
13. tougher to compete for federal money without minorities;
14. lack of legislative commitment to community services i.e., in 1965, the Illinois Legislature said that community services were a part of their commitment, but have reduced or eliminated funding entirely;

15. difficult for small/rural colleges to take advantage of outside resources;
16. small industries and businesses in the area cannot fill on-site classes;
17. industries located in this type of area are usually smaller subsidies of larger corporations and act as training sites for managers, thus, there is a high turnover in managers and a lack of continuity in commitment;
18. chambers of commerce tend to be voluntary social organizations;
19. lack of child care;
20. lack of transportation;
21. local market is usually saturated including areas such as FMI and CPR which have a high equipment cost;
22. necessity to go where the students are, but there aren't enough students taken apart from the whole;
23. community services programs are enrollment driven.

The advantages of offering community services in small/rural colleges are as follows:

1. the college is the center of the community;
2. personal contacts are much easier to establish;
3. identification of power structure and possible groups are easier to identify;
4. there is a greater understanding of the area in terms of both geography and demography;
5. there is a larger percentage of non-high school graduates in the area;
6. the staff has become a part of the community via memberships and community involvement;
7. citizens become part of the college via advisory committees and feel a part of the college community.

8. flexibility;
9. ease of cooperation with other agencies;
10. good ideas emerge to the surface much more quickly than in urban areas;
11. awareness of needs to stimulate people;
12. ability to play your hunches;
13. easy to identify leaders in the community;
14. easier to make a course go via the name of the instructor;
15. government agencies are small and more willing to cooperate;
16. people are more willing to cooperate;
17. teaching or being a member of an advisory committee becomes a status symbol in a small community;
18. college can contribute directly to community development;
19. good media coverage in daily and weekly papers, free advertising.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious from the cited practices that good community service programs are at those institutions which consider themselves a part of the community and not just the college in the community. Community colleges offer some of the services of an area university and some of the services of an area vocational school and, many have been able to identify and clarify the community college's one truly unique mission -- community services. Community colleges must interrupt the traditional credit hour fixation, influence funding patterns and design new yardsticks for measuring community college productivity in order to fulfill this mission.

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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGES